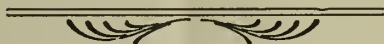


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ILMINSTER

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



# The Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

ILMINSTER URBAN DISTRICT

**For the Year ending**

**31st December, 1913.**

MEMBERS OF THE  
ILMINSTER URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

(FOR 1913.)

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Mr. John Taylor, (*Chairman.*)

„ J. Grabham, (*Vice-Chairman.*)

„ F. T. Adams.

„ R. D. Churchill.

„ T. B. Edmonds.

„ G. E. Parrett.

„ J. R. Paull.

„ A. Poole.

„ S. Rowe.

„ J. F. Sanders.

„ H. H. Shepherd.

„ G. Welch.

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„ J. Duke, *Solicitor, Clerk.*

„ G. W. Warry, *Surveyor and*  
*Sanitary Inspector.*

Dr. Harold Downes, *Medical Officer of Health.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my Third Annual Report of the sanitary condition and vital statistics of your district for the year ending December 31st, 1913.

#### NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

A small market town, with some shirt and collar factories. A certain number of residents are employed in lace-net factories situated outside the district.

#### Geology.

Except at Winterhay, where there is alluvial gravel in the bed of the Ile, Ilminster is situated on the Upper and Lower Lias, a formation consisting of beds of sandy limestone with intervening clay.

<b>Population</b>	-	(estimated)	<b>2,500</b>
<b>Inhabited Houses</b>	-		<b>643</b>
<b>Average Number per house</b>			<b>3·9</b>
<b>Acreage</b>	-	-	<b>529</b>

#### Meteorology.

For the Rainfall I am indebted to Mr. W. Beckwith. It is rather remarkable that the amount recorded should be 12 inches less than is recorded for the Chard Rural District, in the centre of which the town is situated, during the same period.

Total Rainfall during 1913—31·685 inches.

January	5·82	May	2·86	September	2·18
February	·815	June	·6	October	4·66
March	3·155	July	1·095	November	3·595
April	3·485	August	1·355	December	2·065

## **Water Supply.**

The water supply consists of springs and wells. The supply has been abundant. In one case complaints were received, the water analysed, and found to be contaminated by sewage. As the contamination was believed to be of a temporary character it was thought sufficient to have the well thoroughly cleaned out, but further analyses will be made.

These shallow wells are always more or less liable to pollution, and a good gravitation system is greatly to be desired. I am strongly of opinion that when a well is found to be unfit for drinking purposes it should be closed; it is unsafe to allow the water to be used for washing purposes.

## **Rivers and Streams.**

No pollution of watercourses has been reported.

## **Drainage.**

Additional closets have been added in several cases. There should be a separate closet for every house, although perhaps this is not always obtainable. There are many objections to the inmates of separate houses using the same closet, but in the case of old cottages it is not always possible to insist on separate closets being provided.

Old D-traps and pan-closets still exist, I believe in some of the larger houses, and should be replaced.

The Sewage Farm has been inspected both by your Sanitary Inspector and myself, and has been found to be working satisfactorily.

Subjoined is the Sanitary Inspector's list of Nuisances dealt with during the year.

**List of Nuisances remedied  
from Jan. 1st to Dec. 31st, 1913.**

Lime-washing .. .. .	3
New Gullies in place of defective D-traps ..	3
Choked and defective drains .. ..	3
Pigs kept contrary to the Bye-Laws .. ..	1
Insufficient W.C. accommodation .. ..	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

G. W. WARRY, Sanitary Inspector.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that there are still many D-traps existing. These defective traps should be replaced by gullies, as they not only allow of the escape of sewer gas, but they permit the passage of crockery, brushes and other objects, which may obstruct the drains.

### **Scavenging.**

The streets are scavenged every day in the principal parts and twice a week all through. The house refuse is now removed twice weekly. Covered and watertight receptacles should be provided for each house, and the refuse should be removed in covered carts, as I have repeatedly recommended. The system of the removal of house refuse by contract is open to some objections and I would suggest that the Council should consider the advisability of adopting a different system.

### **Milk Supply.**

The number of Cowkeepers entered on the register is five. Inspections were made during the year, and everything was found to be satisfactory.

A register is also kept of the Purveyors of Milk. There is only one Milk-shop, and this is well kept.

## **Slaughter Houses.**

These have been periodically inspected and appear to have been well conducted. No breach of the Bye-Laws was discovered. No diseased meat or unsound food of any kind has been found exposed for sale.

## **Housing and Town-planning Act.**

During the year 45 more houses have been inspected. Slight defects were discovered in 26 cases. A good deal of trouble is given by some property-owners, who delay making the necessary repairs and alterations, and stronger action may be necessary in the future. In certain cases the condition of the houses is entirely the fault of the tenants, and I propose in future to deal effectively with those tenants who persist in keeping their houses in a filthy condition.

A copy of the special report sent to the County Medical Officer of Health is appended. Building has been in active progress during the year. Good cottages are in constant demand, but the need of houses is not sufficiently pressing to call for any special steps on the part of the Sanitary Authority.

## **Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Work-places.**

Thirty-two inspections were made. Insufficient or defective sanitary accommodation was found in two cases, and in one case the matter has been remedied. In the case of the Butter Factory at Winterhay, an undoubted nuisance is occasioned by the waste, and it is hoped that some means will be found to deal with it.

## **Infectious Diseases.**

The cases notified were : Diphtheria 3, Erysipelas 2,

Scarlet Fever 2, Enteric Fever 1, Pulmonary Tuberculosis 5, other forms of Tuberculosis 2, Measles 10, Whooping Cough 4, Total 29. Two deaths occurred from Pulmonary Tuberculosis and two from other forms of Tuberculosis, but none from any other form of notifiable disease. One case of Enteric Fever occurred, the disease being contracted outside the district. Prompt steps were taken, the case isolated, and the patient removed as soon as possible, and no further cases were reported. It is extremely fortunate that the Taunton and Somerset Hospital consented to receive the case. During the interval of waiting for admission two hospital nurses were provided for this case at the expense of the Sanitary Authority.

For the treatment of Tuberculosis a Dispensary has been established at Taunton, where excellent work is being done by the County Tuberculosis Officer, Dr. Short. Patients from this district are eligible for treatment. A similar dispensary is in contemplation at Chard. As far as I am aware there is no immediate prospect of a County Sanatorium. Lady Health Visitors now make periodical visits to notified Tuberculosis cases. They are appointed by the County Council and act under the County Medical Officer and the Tuberculosis Officer. I confess I am sceptical as to the advantages to be derived by the employment of a body of officials of this character. I am quite unable to discover among their duties any that could not be quite as efficiently performed by the Medical Officer of Health, the Sanitary Inspector, and the family Medical Attendant, to say nothing of various well organized charitable bodies ; and although I believe the Health Visitors are as a rule tactful in the performance of their functions, it is found that some patients resent being visited, and it is probable that the officers appointed by the District Council are better qualified to supervise the



sanitary requirements of the district. It does not necessarily follow that a multiplicity of officials with overlapping duties will make for greater efficiency.

### **Disinfection.**

In this district houses are disinfected by spraying with Izal Solution, stripping the paper from the walls, lime-washing, and thoroughly cleansing the floors, the bedding and clothing being also dealt with. No steam disinfecter is available.

### **Vital Statistics.**

These do not call for special notice. The Death-rate, 9, is low, and so is the Birth-rate, 16. Only one death under 1 year is recorded, an exceptionally low infant mortality, and this death followed an operation for a congenital defect; there were therefore no deaths of infants from the usual causes of infant mortality, such as Diarrhœa. Of the 23 deaths, a number much below the average, 4 were due to Tuberculosis, 4 to Pneumonia, and 1 to Cancer. There were 2 deaths from Suicide, and 1 from Accident.

In addition to the compulsory Public Health Acts the following adoptive Acts are in force in the district, viz :—The Public Health Acts Amendment Acts, 1890 and 1907, and the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890. The Notification of Births Act has not been adopted.

No Local Government Board Inquiries were held in the district during the year.



**TABLE I.**

**Vital Statistics of whole District during 1913 and previous Years.**

Year.	Population Estim'd to middle of each year.	Births.			Total Deaths reg. in District.		Transferable Deaths.		Nett. Deaths belong- ing to the District.			
		Uncorrected number.	Nett.						Under 1 Yr.		All Ages.	
			Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	of Non. residents reg. in Dist.	of residents not reg. in Dist.	Number.	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
1908	2302	49	49	21.2	29	12.5					29	12.5
1909	2304	41	41	17.8	30	13.2					30	13.2
1910	2306	44	44	19.0	28	12.1					28	12.1
1911	2467	38	38	15.4	28	11.3		5	2	52.6	33	13.3
1912	2483	43	43	17.3	28	11.2		1	2	46.5	29	11.6
1913	2500	40	40	16.0	22	8.4	0	1	1	25.0	23	9.02

**TABLE II.**

**Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the  
Year 1913.**

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.	At all ages	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup) }	3			1		2		
Erysipelas .. ..	2				1	1		
Scarlet fever .. ..	2			2				
Enteric fever .. ..	1		1					
Pulmonary Tuberculosis }	5				3	1	1	
Other forms of Tuberculosis }	2			1	1			
Measles .. ..	10			6	3	1		
Whooping Cough ..	4		3	1				
<b>Totals ..</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

*Isolation Hospital or Hospitals, Sanatoria, &c., None.*

**TABLE III.****Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1913.**

CAUSES OF DEATH.		Deaths in the whole District at subjoined ages.								
		All ages	Under 1	1 to 2	2 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 & upwards
All causes {	Certified ..	23	1	1	1	3	1	3	7	6
	Uncertified ..	0								
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) }		2					1	1		
Tuberculous Meningitis }		1				1				
Other Tuberculous Diseases }		1							1	
Cancer, Malignant Disease }		1								1
Organic Heart Disease		3						1	1	1
Bronchitis .. ..		1								1
Pneumonia (all forms)		4		1	1	1				1
Nephritis and Bright's Disease }		1							1	
Congenital Debility and Malformation including Premature Birth }		1	1							
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide }		1							1	
Suicide .. ..		2						1		1
Other defined Diseases		4				1			2	1
Diseases ill-defined or unknown }		1							1	

**TABLE IV.****Infant Mortality. Deaths from stated Causes at various Ages under 1 Year of Age.**

None.

**HOUSING.**

Number of Houses in the Sanitary District	..	643.
New Houses erected during 1913	.. ..	13.
Number of Houses inspected during 1913 } under the Housing Act, 1909.	} ..	45.
(a) Number reported as unfit for human habitation		0.
(b) Number defective, but with defects not sufficient } to report as unfit for habitation		26.
(c) Number without recorded sanitary defects		19.

**Action taken with regard to defective houses but not sufficient to report as unfit, as follows:—**

For Houses first examined during	1912.	1913.
Number so examined .. ..	45	45
Number with the defects remedied } by the end of 1913	38	9
Number still defective at end of 1913	2	17
Cases of overcrowding dealt with } during the year	0	0

NOTE:—Some houses are still under observation; the defects are trifling.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

HAROLD DOWNES, M.B.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Ilminster,

Feb., 1914.

